LIFE STORIES OF MEN WHO HAVE COMMITTED FEMICIDE IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

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National Femicide Rate in 2017: 1.1

- Of the total number of homicides, 13.5% were femicides.
- 64% of female victims of intentional homicide were victims of femicide.
- 44% of the femicides were of women aged 24-44.
- 83% of the cases had a previous relationship with perpetrators.
- 66% of the cases occurred in the home of the victim.

All crude rates are expressed per 100,000 inhabitants using judicial data from 2017.
Social and Health Sciences focused on violence have traditionally emphasised the analysis of victims.

More attention has been given to quantitative approaches (contextual aspects or individual-level variables).

Riche’s paradox: the meanings attributed by the performers of violence are rarely studied directly, despite the fact that this is central to understand the phenomenon.
OBJECTIVES

1. Analyse from a hermeneutic approach the life stories of men who have intentionally killed women in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2. *(Underlying methodological purpose)* Explore usefulness of biographical approach in the analysis of perpetrators of violence.
METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGY

- Biographical hermeneutic approach
- Data collection:
  - Population: men 20-32 years-old from marginalised areas who have been charged with femicide
  - In-depth narrative interviews
  - Purposeful sample strategy
  - 12 cases were re-constructed (29 interviews)
- Data analysis:
  - Identification of indexes and turning-points
  - Storyline construction
  - Thematic analysis
**Biographical Indexes**

- Common childhood or teenage experiences with different forms of violence.
- Early-age learning process in which *male-chauvinist values* were socialised.
- Learning processes of violence, either among peers or within the family.
- Biographical turning-points where *death* and/or physical, psychological or institutional *abuse* was present.
THEMES IN THE NARRATIVES

- Common belief that there was “no other option, but violence”.
- A link in their narratives between moral definitions of manhood, strength, honour and possession of women.
- Decision-making process as a core aspect disputed during confrontations with women.
- A simultaneous absence and avoidance of public and private institutions (hospitals, social programs, education establishments, etc.) that could mediate the conflicts.
**TRAJECTORIES AND NARRATIVES**

Typology of trajectories/narratives of femicide perpetrators according to IPV in relationships and narrative explanations*

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<th>IPV as a constant</th>
<th>IPV as extraordinary</th>
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| **Contextual explanations** (ex. «it’s how we were raised»; «Responsibilities were overwhelming me») | Victim narrative  
  - No agency  
  - Women have a secondary role in life stories | Exceptionality narrative  
  - No agency  
  - Major responsibility located in external factor (work, relatives, finances, etc.) |
| **Individual explanations** (ex. «I have a temper problem»; «I have an aggressive and possessive personality») | Redemption narrative  
  - Decontextualisation  
  - Constant reference to gender-violence programmes | Outburst narrative  
  - Exceptionality of the act  
  - No identification as aggressor |

*This typology is based on narratives in which the locus of explanations are positioned on the men, and not on women.
Femicide is present in the narratives as major turning-points.

- However, the attributed meaning is more related to incarceration and feeling judged by peers that the actual crime.

- Incarceration is sometimes associated with a “positive turning-point” as the beginning of a new life.
**Methodological Remarks**

- Life histories and stories of perpetrators provide “emic” insight into the complex phenomenon.

- Special attention must be paid to mainstream discourses that condition the narratives.

- Prevention programs must consider how the specific gender representations influence violent actions and conflicts in each cultural context.
Empirical Remarks

- Underlying moral pattern that explains gender-based violence.

- Violence, women and masculinity are not homogeneously defined by perpetrators, yet similar moral understandings can be observed.

- Femicide could be further understood by the analysis of how socialisation processes, turning-points and early-age abuse intertwine.
RECOMMENDATIONS – KEY POINTS (MEN’S PERSPECTIVE)

1. Address acceptability of violence (in general)
   • High threshold of violence is endemic in male culture.
2. Contact with schools is key
   • First possible contact with prevention programmes
3. Social movements and public problematisation are major preventive aspects
   • Gender perspective triggers awareness
4. Interventions should not be focused exclusively on individuals, but also on groups of peers
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

¡Gracias por la atención!